

CCTV cameras capture a hero's lonely end

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Mumbai : Inspector Shashank Shinde died a hero's death, but he also died a lonely death. Because close-circuit television (CCTV) cameras at CST station had apparently been tampered with, they ended up recording how Shinde was deserted by fellow police officers and was left fighting the heavily armed terrorists alone. Had the positions of the cameras not been changed, the true extent of Shinde's courage may never have been known. Sources say when all the CCTV cameras at the station were checked by the Central Railway Administration after 26/11, it was found that many of them were not functioning properly. While 16 cameras in the mainline failed to record the terror attack, two others installed for surveillance of the entry gates to the suburban section were turned towards the concourse hall instead.

"These cameras were installed to keep vigil on the people coming and going through gates. They could also record some portion of the passage between the mainline and suburban section. However, they were turned in such a way that they could not record the activities outside the suburban section. Nevertheless, these cameras recorded the final bravery of Shashank Shinde," informed a police official.

In the available footage, Shinde was seen running diagonally between the concourse hall from Platform 7 to the gate of the GM building at 9.59 pm on November 26. He had his hand in his trouser pocket, apparently attempting to retrieve his weapon. When he entered the gate of the GM building, he was seen with three police personnel. Two were armed with carbines, while one had a .303 rifle. All were seen moving towards Platform 7, but after two minutes, Shinde was alone and seen taking cover behind pillars. He was suddenly seen at the gate of GM building again. It appears as if he was looking for backup, but the Government Railway Police (GRP) and Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel who had been standing there were gone. At 10.01 pm, Shinde started making his way to Platform 7 again. At this point, he disappears from view amid sounds of gunfire.

According to sources, this was the point when Shinde was killed. "The police staff who came with Shinde escaped from the scene when they saw the terrorists coming. Shinde got down on the ground to fire at the gunmen, but his weapon was no match for their AK-47s. After this, the terrorists fled from Platform 7 and using the footbridge, they escaped from the lane near the Times of India Building. A Times of India photographer took a picture of them at 10.9 pm. And though the police said they fired 47 rounds, they only came out of their safe places after 10.10 to open fire."

"If they had supported Shinde, those two terrorists could not have left alive from CST," said a witness. According to A K Sharma, Commissioner GRP, said : "I have not seen the footage, but Shinde's was a true act of bravery. I have recommended him for the Ashok Chakra to the state Government."